GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1734
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2016
Impact of Soil Erosion on Agriculture
Nishad Shri Ajay

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether agricultural production has declined in certain parts of the country due to soil erosion, land degradation and desertification;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether any study has been conducted on soil erosion and land degradation/desertification in the country including Maharashtra;

(d) if so, the details and the results thereof, State-wise; and

(e) the measures being adopted to check land degradation and enhance soil fertility?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) & (b): As such no specific survey on decline in agricultural production due to soil erosion, land degradation and desertification has been conducted. However, the expected loss of potential production due to water erosion computed by Indian Institute of Soil & Water Conservation (IISWC) in red, black and alluvial soils of rainfed areas in India under major cereal, oilseed, and pulse crops comes out to be around 16%. In other words had the erosion not taken place, the country could have got additional production to the tune of 13.48 million tonnes. State-wise details are given in Annexure-I.

(c) & (d): Yes, Madam. As per the harmonized database, the extent of land degradation in the country is 120.4 million ha comprising of 82.6 million ha under water erosion, 12.0 million ha under wind erosion, 24.7 million ha under chemical degradation and 1.0 million ha under physical degradation. The state-wise details, including Maharashtra, are given in Annexure-II.

As per Desertification Status Map of Space Application Centre, ISRO 2007, the area undergoing desertification is 81.45 million ha, which constitutes 24.78% of country's geographical area. The state-wise details are placed at Annexure III.

(e) In order to prevent soil erosion and land degradation/ desertification, the Government of India, has been implementing several programs, namely; National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA), Soil Conservation in the Catchments of River Valley Project, Flood Prone River (RVP&FPR), Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programmes (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) across the country. These programmes have been amalgamated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) with effect from 26.02.2009. The major activities taken up under IWMP inter alia include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rainwater harvesting, nursery raising, afforestation, horticulture, pasture development etc. The IWMP has now become one of the major components of Prime Minister's Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY).

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research through IISWC provide technical backstopping and organizes regular training courses for field functionaries and farmers on participatory watershed management.

The Government is implementing National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) since April 2014 with a component of Reclamation of Problem soils viz., saline, alkali and acid soils.

In order to improve soil health and fertility, the Government under the component of soil health management of NMSA is promoting soil test based balanced and integrated nutrient management in the country through setting up/strengthening of soil testing laboratories, establishment of bio-fertilizer and compost unit, use of micronutrients, trainings and demonstrations on balanced use of fertilizers etc. Recently, a National Mission on Soil Health Card has been launched to provide soil tested based fertilizer recommendation to all the farmers in the country.
****